

Native Plant Society of Texas
Big Bend Chapter
February 2007 newsletter

Chapter President Polly Melton - NPSOT Support Sought for Park Planting -

With the New Year we have learned of an exciting, new opportunity to further NPSOT's mission of promoting the utilization of native plants!

Alpine architect Tom Greenwood has been working with residents of Ward 4 and the Brewster Co. Veterans Memorial Committee to design a new park for the Pueblo Nuevo neighborhood. The park will occupy the block bordered by East Avenue H, South Hancock St. East Gallego Ave. and South Chastain St.

The main focus of the park will be a veterans' memorial which includes a commemorative sculpture, flagpoles for the flags of the United States, Texas POW/MIA and each military branch and a meditation area. There will also be two children's play areas, a Life Trail with ten exercise stations for adults, handicapped accessible restrooms and picnic ramadas with barbecues. A parking area will accommodate a large number of visitors for special events and ceremonies at the park.

The planting plan for the park is envisioned to consist almost entirely of native plants. Jennifer Baur has been collaborating with Greenwood to develop a pallet of materials suitable to the site and region. Native trees, such as Escarpment Oak, Southern Live Oak, Bur Oak, Chinquapin Oak, Chinese Pistache, Desert Willow, Mexican Pinon, Texas Persimmon and Goldenball Leadtree will line walkways and shade sitting areas. Buffalo grass is planned as a ground cover in the center of the memorial area around the flagpoles and monuments. South of a red granite line in the configuration of the Rio Grande, which defines the memorial area, beds of native plants will separate the memorial from the parking area.

In order to make the project possible, it needs broad community's support - philosophically, financially and physically in terms of ongoing maintenance. The neighborhood and Veterans Committee have approved the plan (see plan at <http://www.ci.alpine.tx.us/vm.shtml>). The next step for the project is to seek Park Board approval in March, prior to its being presented to the City Council. Once local approval is obtained grants will be written to state and federal agencies.

NPSOT's support - at whatever level we can give it - will be important to the project's moving forward. Although it is not our practice to conduct business at every meeting, in order to have timely input to this project, at the February meeting I will ask that we consider supporting this project and, if agreed, write a letter to the Parks Board and City Council prior to the project being presented to them in March.

Let's seize this opportunity to promote native plants and make the most of it!

Press release for Feb. 17 meeting -

In the papers this week. Please be sure to call Alice and make your reservations asap - we are limited to 40 because of the room size.

"The February meeting of the Big Bend Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas presents "Orchids of the Trans-Pecos" from 10 a.m. to noon on Saturday, February 17 in the "movie room" of the Marfa Public Library, 115 East Oak St.

From the swamps and forests of East Texas to the Edwards Plateau canyons and the Trans Pecos mountains, Texas hosts 54 species of native orchids, at least 14 of them native to the Trans-Pecos.

Sul Ross biologist Karen Little will guide participants in learning about pollination and reproduction, special growing requirements and habitat and threats to orchids from loss of habitat and over collecting.

The meeting is free to members; visitors are welcome and asked to make a \$5 per person donation. Membership information will be available at the meeting.

Reservations are necessary and may be made by calling One Way Plant Nursery in Alpine, 837.1117 by noon Feb. 16."

Looking ahead to April 14 -

Just in time for spring garden planting and planning what to buy at the CDRI native plant sale at the end of April, NPSOT presents a full morning of Wildscaping with some of Texas' heavy hitters in the native plant world - Jill Nokes, Austin garden designer whose book *How to Grow Native Plants of Texas and the Southwest* is THE work on growing Texas native along with Lois Balinm, whose plant lists for wildlife are the centerfold of the Big Bend Gardener's Guide. Then water expert Mike Mecke and organic garden wonder Martha Latta will talk about creating water features for wildlife and gardening organically.

The program runs from 9 to 1 at Indian Lodge in the Davis Mountains State Park north of Fort Davis. This is a fund-raiser for the chapter and hopefully a time for new people to see what NPSOT is all about. So please talk it up and invite your friends and neighbors!

Registration will be by mail - you'll get info by e-mail (or in the mail if you don't have e-mail). Print out the registration form and send it with your check or money order to Martha Latta in Alpine.

Details to follow in mid-February - for now, please mark your calendars - April 14, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m..

Alpine Recycling -

Folks from all over the area can use the recycling facility in Alpine. Texas Disposal Systems has an expanded recycling repertoire - at the Alpine Post Office Sat. 10 to 1. They take **all metal, 1 and 2 plastic, all glass, all paper except pasteboard** (the card-like paper that cereal boxes are made of). There is a dumpster for corrugated across the street behind the Alpine City Hall.

This week they left the wagon there all weekend, but I don't know if that will continue. They will use this set-up until their yard gets under way.

IDEA! Can anyone come up with a use for pasteboard? Could we grind it and use it as mulch? Add it to soil to aerate? Put it in compost piles for the worms? No one recycles it, but it seems that there must be a way to use it - notwithstanding the ink and dyes in the printing. Suggestions welcome!

Sustainable Living Group -

Next meeting is Monday Feb. 12th, 6-7 p.m., in Room 300 of Lawrence Hall on the SRSU campus. There will be a presentation on Solar Electric Systems, and the group will begin organizing an Organic/Veganic Community Gardening Program and signing up area Gardeners and Farmers interested in attending a weekend workshop covering "No-till" agriculture.

There will be updates on sustainable building, food, water, energy and transportation. For those that can stay, there will be a DVD and follow up with a discussion group.

The meeting is free and open to the public. For more details call Bennett Jones at 837-3008 or E-mail bennett@lydiancity.com

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